

Site: M: 26/10/53

McDonald / Gilchrist House

405 West Montgomery Avenue

Built: 1909

Private

The McDonald / Gilchrist House is important for its association with three elected officials and as a representative of Rockville's vernacular Colonial Revival style in close-to-original condition. It was constructed for Major John McDonald, Congressman, State representative, and active in Montgomery County affairs. The next owner was Otho Talbott, Maryland State Senator. The current owner is Charles Gilchrist, Montgomery County Executive, who formerly served in the State Senate.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## State Historic Sites Inventory Form

### 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic The McDonald House

and/or common The Gilchrist House

### 2. Location

street & number 405 West Montgomery Avenue

   not for publication

city, town Rockville

   vicinity of

congressional district

8

state Maryland

county

Montgomery

### 3. Classification

#### Category

☒ district  
☒ building(s)  
☐ structure  
☐ site  
☐ object

#### Ownership

☒ public  
☒ private  
☐ both

#### Public Acquisition

☐ in process  
☐ being considered  
☒ not applicable

#### Status

☒ occupied  
☐ unoccupied  
☐ work in progress

#### Accessible

☐ yes: restricted  
☐ yes: unrestricted  
☒ no

#### Present Use

☐ agriculture  
☐ commercial  
☐ educational  
☐ entertainment  
☐ government  
☐ industrial  
☐ military

☐ museum  
☐ park  
☒ private residence  
☐ religious  
☐ scientific  
☐ transportation  
☐ other:

### 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Charles W. and Phoebe R. Gilchrist

street & number 405 West Montgomery Avenue

telephone no.: 762-8704

city, town Rockville

state and zip code

Maryland 20850

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery Co. Land Records

3501

street & number Montgomery Co. Courthouse

liber

39

city, town

Rockville

folio

Maryland

state

state

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title National Register of Historic Places (1974)

date City of Rockville Historic District (1974)

X

   federal

   state

   county

X

   local

depository for survey records City of Rockville

city, town Rockville

state

Maryland

## 7. Description

Survey No. M-26/10/53

### Condition

☒ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☒ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The house at 405 West Montgomery Avenue faces south on a large rectangular lot that adjoins the rear public alley. A number of large deciduous trees provide shade, and abundant shrubbery surrounds the house. A 2-story shed in poor condition is located at the extreme northeast corner of the lot. (See Plat, Attachment 7.2)

This 2-1/2-story, full Georgian plan (center-hall) house with rear 2-story ell has a hipped roof with flat top. An exterior staircase, enclosed 1932-33, and 2-story addition with shed roof at the northeast corner make the L-shaped house a slightly irregular square. It is sheathed in clapboard, now covered with aluminum siding. The roof is pressed tin with lightning rods along the edge, except for the rear 2-story addition. It is set on a brick foundation. Almost all of the windows are 1-over-1 with flat lintels and wooden louvered shutters. There are three internal brick chimneys located on the sides of the flat top roof and one brick flue at the rear.

Constructed in 1909, the house is designed in a vernacular Colonial Revival style that is similar to several other houses in the neighborhood. The prominent stylistic elements are the full-width, one-story porch with Doric columns, fanlight front door, and symmetrical five-part facade.

The five-bay south (front) facade has a striking symmetrical arrangement with prominent center bay. This center has a strong visual presence starting at the wide front wooden steps with paired columns on either side, an exterior door with fanlight and four-pane sidelights over wooden panels, a tripartite window in the 2nd story, and a similar smaller window in the dormer. The 2nd and 1/2-story windows are Palladian-inspired, having narrow windows flanking a wider center window. All remaining bays have single windows that are positioned close together. The full-width, one-story, porch has six Doric columns supporting it and is set on brick piers. A balustrade connects the front columns.

The three-bay west facade has an even fenestration of 1-over-1 windows. The recessed rear ell, however, has 6-over-1 windows. A small 4-light window is in a one-story rear lean-to.

The north facade has an asymmetrical massing formed by the rear ell, one-story lean-to, 1/2-story lean-to, 1-story screened porch, 2-story addition with shed roof, and 2-story enclosed stairwell. A row of windows are on the 2nd-story addition. The roofs of these lean-tos and additions are covered with asphalt shingles.

-Continued on attachment 7.1

## 8. Significance

Survey No M:26/10/53

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	1909	Builder/Architect
check: Applicable Criteria: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D		
and/or		
Applicable Exception: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G		
Level of Significance: <input type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> state <input type="checkbox"/> local		

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The house at 405 West Montgomery Avenue is important for its association with three local elected officials and as a representative of Rockville's vernacular Colonial Revival style in close-to-original condition.

Major John McDonald (1837-1917), born in Ireland, veteran of Indian and Civil War campaigns, retired to a farm near Potomac in Montgomery County in the late 1860s. He became active in the County Grange, the Montgomery County Agricultural Society, the Grand Army of the Republic, the Loyal Legion, Rockville's Masonic Lodge No. 195, the Rockville Protestant Episcopal Church, and the Mutual Fire Insurance Company. He represented Montgomery County in the Maryland General Assembly for one term.

In 1896 McDonald defeated Blair Lee for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Elected as a Republican in an overwhelmingly Democratic County, he served one term. 1/

In 1863, Captain McDonald married Mary J. Benton; they had six children, but Mrs. McDonald died before the turn of the century. McDonald caused a social stir in 1908 when at the age of 71 he married Rosa Marie ("Molly") Holland, aged 61. Molly Holland had been living with her sisters at 100 Forest Avenue (Site #M:26/10/31), and this was her first marriage.

Tradition says that Molly desired a larger house than the Forest Avenue residence of her sister, Mrs. Hattersley W. Talbott. The McDonalds' large symmetrical residence was constructed in the spring and summer of 1909 2/, the living and formal areas on the first floor, five bedrooms on the second floor, and expansive attic easily accommodating the McDonalds and attendant household workers.

Major McDonald died in 1917 at age 80. Three years later, his widow sold the property to her nephew and his wife, Otho and Katherine Talbott; Otho Talbott was a Maryland State Senator. About 1932-33, Katherine enclosed an outside stairwell on the east side when she converted the second floor to a rental apartment. (See Photograph, attachment 8.2)

Survey No. <sup>M</sup> 26/10/53

## 10. Geographical Data

**Quadrangle scale** \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

### 11. Form Prepared By

city or town      Rockville      state      Maryland 20850

PS-2746

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The McDonald / Gilchrist House  
Attachment 7.1

The east facade has a 2-story bay window with windows in each bay, each floor. Single windows are on each floor of the first bay. The rear enclosed staircase has an exterior door and two irregularly placed windows without shutters that face south. A wide cornice extends from the house linking this enclosure.

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M:

The McDonald / Gilchrist House  
Attachment 8.1

After Otho's death, Katherine Talbott sold the home to friends, Admiral Lloyd and Harriet Thomas, for \$21,000. <sup>3/</sup> In 1957, the property was conveyed to Thomas and Anna Johnson, who held the mortgage. Six months later, William and Betty Frank of Massachusetts bought the house, <sup>4/</sup> and the present owners purchased it in May of 1966.

The Gilchrists have converted the attic into a usable room, installing a skylight, and sheathed the original clapboards in aluminum siding. Charles W. Gilchrist, a Washington native with family ties to upper Montgomery County, is a former tax lawyer who served a term as Maryland State Senator (1974-78). He was elected Montgomery County Executive in 1978 and is currently serving his second term in that office.

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Footnotes:

1. Chapman, Ed. , Portrait & Biographical Record (1898), p.215-6; also, McDonald obituary, Evening Star, February 1, 1917.
2. Montgomery County Sentinel, June 11 and 18, 1909.
3. Montgomery County Land Records, 1277/244 (1949)
4. Ibid., 2397/556



CIRCA 1922

Owners Otho H.W. & Katherine C. Talbott

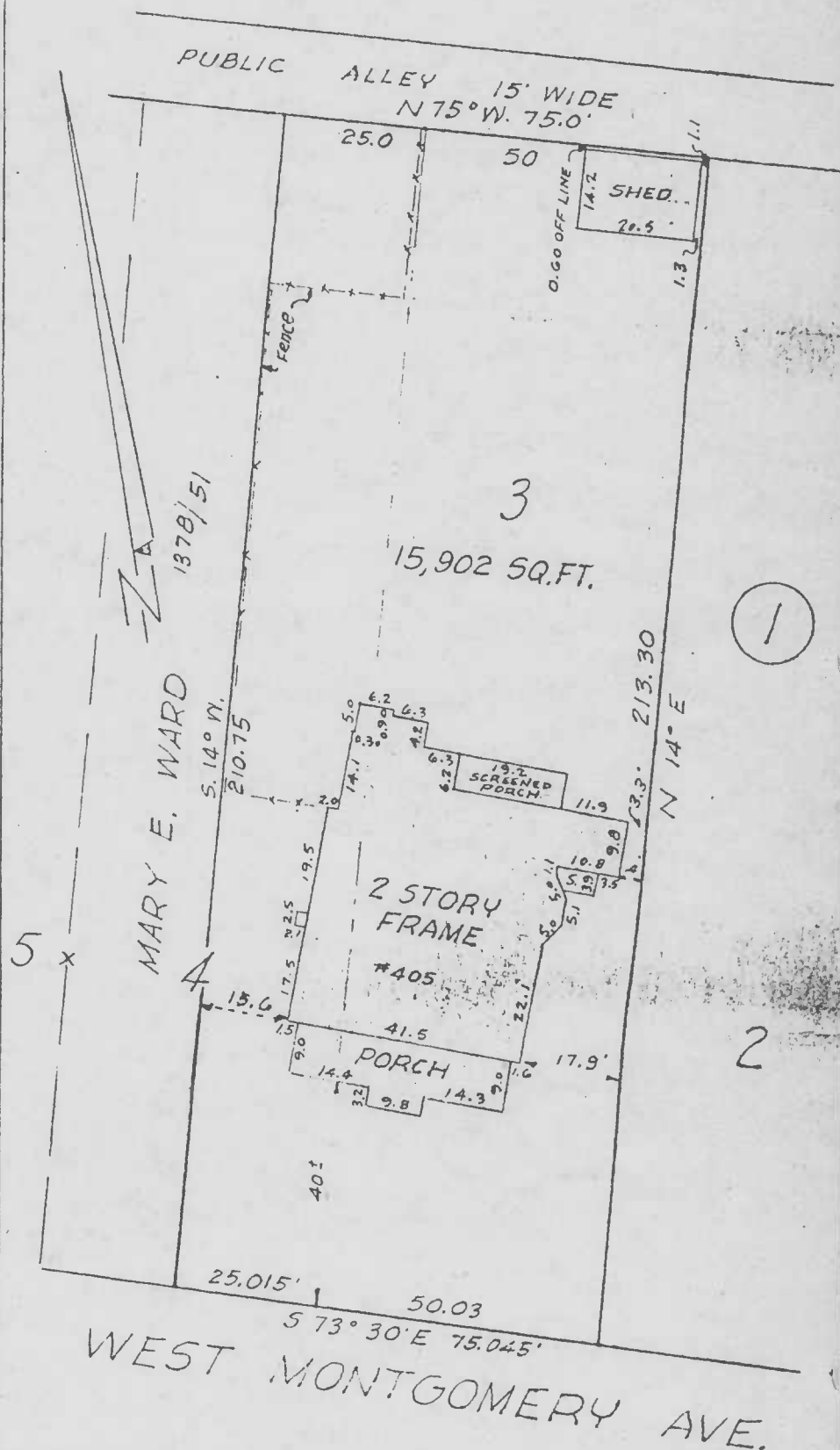
M: 26/10/53  
McDonald/Gilchrist House  
405 West Montgomery Ave.  
Attachment 8.2

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE POSITION OF ALL THE EXISTING IMPROVEMENTS ON THE DESCRIBED PROPERTY HAS BEEN CAREFULLY ESTABLISHED BY A TRANSIT TAPE SURVEY AND THAT UNLESS OTHERWISE SHOWN THERE ARE NO ENCROACHMENTS.

SCALE-1"-30'  
APRIL 22, 1966

R. K. MADDOX, COUNTY SURVEYOR  
COURT HOUSE, ROCKVILLE, MD.

McDonald/Gilchrist Hous  
405 W. Montgomery Ave.  
Attachment 7.2







RICHARD H. ANDREWS  
424-8282  
1608 FARRAGUT AVE.  
ROCKVILLE, MD 20851

06P5-14-4

Mi. 26/10/53

405 W. Montg Ave.  
Rockville  
So. Facade  
6/85